

**LEMON GROVE CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Item No. 4
Mtg. Date January 6, 2015
Dept. City Manager's Office

Item Title: Sidewalk Installation Incentive Programs

Staff Contact: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

Recommendation:

Provide feedback regarding the establishment of a sidewalk installation incentive program.

Item Summary:

During its priority setting workshop in February 2014, the City Council directed staff to prepare an agenda item that would allow the City Council to discuss potential guidelines for a community sidewalk program. Staff presents a staff report (**Attachment A**) that introduces several sidewalk incentive program concepts for City Council discussion. Staff recommends that the City Council consider the ideas presented in the staff report and provide feedback.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Environmental Review:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not subject to review | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Declaration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exemption, Section [] | <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigated Negative Declaration |

Public Information:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter article | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice to property owners within 300 ft. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notice published in local newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood meeting | |

Attachments:

A. Staff Report

LEMON GROVE CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Item No. 4

Mtg. Date January 6, 2015

Item Title: **Sidewalk Installation Incentive Programs**

Staff Contact: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

Discussion:

During its priority setting workshop in February 2014, the City Council directed staff to prepare an agenda item that would allow the City Council to discuss potential guidelines for a community sidewalk program. Staff introduces several sidewalk incentive program concepts for City Council discussion. Staff recommends that the City Council consider the ideas presented in the staff report and provide feedback.

Background

Since the housing boom post World War II, most new housing development that occurred in the State of California occurred through the development of subdivisions or master planned neighborhoods. Almost every incorporated city in the State required these types of neighborhoods to include sidewalks. The sidewalks were constructed as part of the overall subdivision development and the cost was passed on to the homebuyer. This strategy for installing sidewalks within new development sites continues today. Through this process, ultimately, property owners are the ones that pay for the installation of sidewalks.

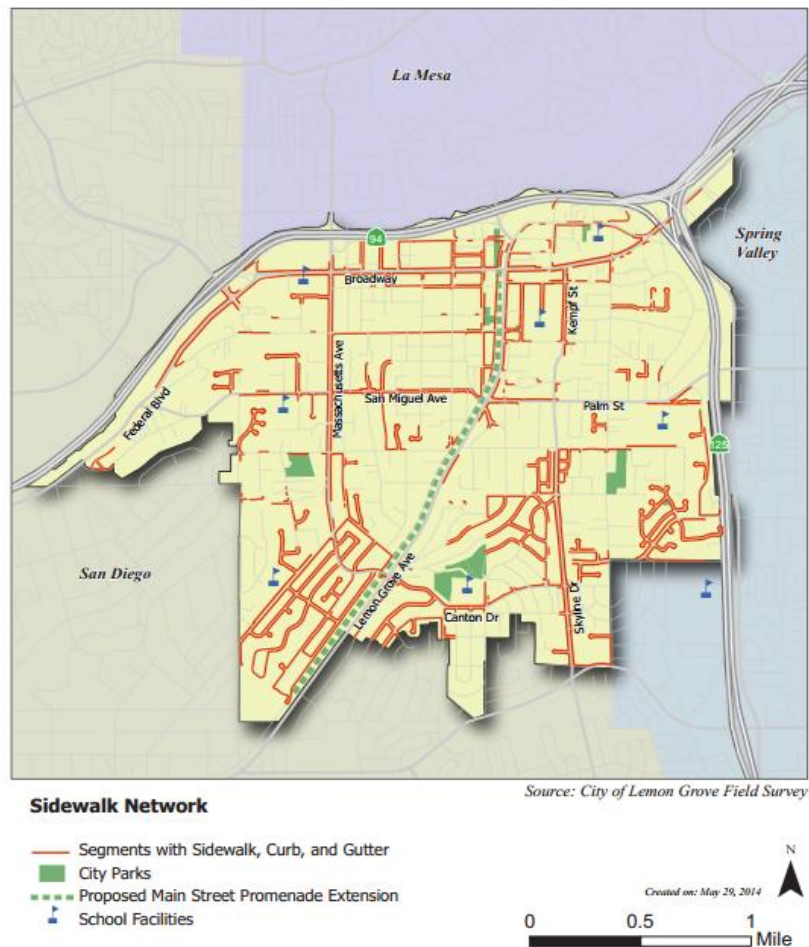
The majority of Lemon Grove's housing development occurred prior to the City's incorporation. The County of San Diego managed the growth and development standards for housing development during this time. Although the County required sidewalk installation in some housing developments, many Lemon Grove neighborhoods do not have sidewalks. In fact, during the preparation of the last General Plan update in 1996, this was an issue of community debate—some community members pushed for sidewalks while others wanted to maintain a rural feel by not installing sidewalks.

Several sidewalk projects have shown the positive impact sidewalks can have on a neighborhood, notably, the sidewalk projects on San Miguel Avenue (between Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street) and on Central Avenue (between Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street).

The recent Lemon Grove Health & Wellness Element included a map that illustrated the City's sidewalk network (see page 4 of this staff report). The map shows that there are many east-west sidewalk connections in the City (Broadway, Central Avenue, San Miguel Avenue, portions of Palm Street, and Canton Drive). However, north-south connects are lacking, except for Massachusetts Avenue, Lemon Grove Avenue and portions of Skyline Drive/Kempf Street and Main Street). The map also shows that although there is effective sidewalk connection within the City's commercial corridors, there is a lack of connectivity from neighborhoods to the commercial areas of the City and between neighborhoods.

Attachment A

Map 5: Existing Sidewalk Network



For additional background information, staff calculated the cost to install a segment of sidewalk, curb and gutter for an average 60 foot wide parcel and verified this figure with several contractors. Assuming the project requires surveying, engineering, mobilization, traffic control, street widening, driveway ramp, and prevailing wage, staff assumes a cost of approximately \$6,000 to \$9,000 per parcel. This figure assumes that there are no significant slope issues or public drainage issues that need to be resolved.

Incentive Program Concepts

Staff has researched sidewalk incentive programs. This search yielded many examples of programs that help property owners pay for sidewalk repair to existing sidewalks through city matching funds. Some programs match as much as 60 percent of the sidewalk repair, with the property owner paying for 40 percent.

Staff did not find a matching-type program that incentivized the installation of new sidewalks. Some of the major differences between a sidewalk repair incentive program and a sidewalk installation incentive program include:

- Lack of public right-of-way, in some instances,
- Lack of connectivity with other sidewalks,
- Additional street improvements required as part of project (storm drainage, slope stabilization, site preparation, additional street improvements, etc.)

Attachment A

Given the lack of right-of-way in many areas of the City, staff recommends that any program require that sufficient right-of-way be dedicated to the City free of charge in order to participate. Staff recommends that a program encourage sections of sidewalk be installed, not just one parcel of sidewalk at a time. There are several ways to encourage the installation of sections. First, the City Council could require participation only if entire block sections agree to participate. Second, the program could offer a more significant match in exchange for greater levels of private property participation. As an example, a program could be designed that offered a minimum City match for the installation of sidewalk for one parcel, a greater match when two to four parcels are developed with sidewalk, and a maximum match for five or more parcels that develop sidewalks.

A second way to provide incentives is to provide no- or low-interest rate loans to property owners to finance sidewalk installation. The loans could be paid over a five- to ten-year period. To fund the program, the City could create a revolving loan fund that would operate on a first-come-first-serve basis. Over time, the loan fund would be replenished as loan payments are made. A City matching incentive could be added to this type of program to encourage the installation of larger sections of sidewalk.

A third possible incentive program is the formation of neighborhood assessment districts. The assessment district could pay for the sidewalk improvements over a longer period of time (up to ten to twenty years). However, the assessment would include financing costs, which add to the overall cost of the project. A City matching incentive could also be added to this type of program to encourage the installation of larger sections of sidewalk.

Conclusion:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the ideas presented in the staff report and provide feedback.